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POINT

Board of Directors Meeting
Mill Valley, California
February 6-7, 1972

Present:

Lois Brand
Stewart Brand
Bill English
Roberta English
Huey Johnson
Susie Johnson
Jerry Mander
Pierre Mornell (Elijah)
Mike Phillips
Dick Raymond
Diana Shugart

The meeting opened with Diana Shugart acting as moderator for this session.

Huey: Introduces Elijah, who is Pierre Mornell, a psychiatrist living in Bolinas. He was involved in early efforts to head off the Vietnam war through land manipulation and is currently working on a book on intimacy. He will describe later in the meeting a project idea he is developing.

Diana: Asks for additions to agenda.

Jerry: Wants to add projects to the list.

Dick: Wants time to rap about a book, The Money Givers. The statistics on board members were very negative and the book cited examples of unwise money giving. I propose wiser investing and disposition and focusing on subjects such as dealing with environmental projects, advancing social good or social change rather than what Buckminster Fuller terms 'getting behind technology'. Would like to explore dream projects for POINT, such as things on the scale of Woodstock or Ralph Nader.

Huey: Notes that a bookstore in Mill Valley reports the Catalog is selling like hotcakes. Passes out Jim Morgan's report--Jim stayed here for 1-1/2 weeks and did considerable work improving his slide show presentation. I'm trying to round up some underground support for Jim with a guy in a trout association and another in a cattlemen's association, to work for change from the inside.

Stewart: Bill Goetz has started work on the Bufano Book, have seen some of the material--it looks good. Bill is still planning to do some traveling this summer and I'm putting him in touch with people who are doing the same thing.

Mike: Following links of referrals, asking creative, extraordinary people "Who is the most creative, extraordinary person you know?", going to that person, asking the same question, etc. There has been a favorable response and find some names coming up repeatedly. Need use of Watts line to economize on phone calls. Alice Tepper is getting ready to finish her work with CEP and is readying a system for rating corporations for CEP use.

Dick: Fred Moore is working in a disciplined way, reading, organizing his thoughts and contacting monied community radicals. Fred had suggested the board consider a young person, perhaps a child, as an Elijah, and also consider asking agents to suggest other agents. A report on my own work is being typed up, which reflects my everyday process and involvement with a 'mixed bag' of people and organizations.

Jerry: Joan McIntyre is vacationing to recover from money shock and is gathering new energy. Have no plans for myself, but am observing myself as agent, and am keeping a calendar of activities for the past month and find my schedule is still filled with meeting with good people and find that agenting has given me greater energy and feeling of freedom in these activities. Still want to do an ad aimed at men sometime in the future.

Bill: To soon for a report on Janet Flegel.

Huey: Have been studying a doctoral dissertation from University of Michigan, on what makes for agent effectiveness in community organizations or community agents. Still interested in New Mexico Environmental Institute, am lining up people for activist chairs, developing land speculation program (to create capital to give away). Have been using an attorney named Ted Silk for tax counseling and feel past experience shows having a second lawyer's opinion in important legal matters indispensable and suggest POINT tighten dealings by doing same. Recommend Silk be hired to give opinion on our moneygiving from tax standpoint.

There is general discussion on the value of having a second opinion to strenghthen our IRS position and iron out terminology.

Jerry: Propose hiring Silk and get written legal opinion on these questions.

More discussion and comments on individual concerns regarding our vulnerability and desire to have two opinions, even assuming Silk will support Larry Kline's findings. The question of a budget for such work is discussed and Mike is appointed to handle arrangements and fee with Silk.

Diana: Any further "spend now or later" papers? (None offered) Jerry, do you have any changes on your view on spending?

Jerry: Still favor fast spending, but have adopted attitude to spend sensibly but not make money grow. Have no time limit on spending, feel we should spend when there is agreement. Still view 'money as energy'. POINT board should resign at some point and create a new board from present agents.

Huey: From my experience, I must take the opposite view. Money is not energy because of the way this nation views it. It is a symbolic force reaching the hearts of men. There is human progress from people being able to do things, that is what gives hope. I see the Catalog as elegance and money from it is symbolic. We should have more responsibility. Want to avoid future criticism on POINT having just done something for the love of it, we should continue to create capital which is symbolic. Want to experiment with increasing the money (I'm giving away money every year). We would be forced to deal with new ideas, get view from broader plane and allow others to get into that same place. People thinking about good is more important than the money--we should go on as an institute others may grow from.

Jerry: My view of money in the United States is something to get and hold on to, money becomes IT. In fact it is less important than the American view and suggest we do symbolic act of giving it all away to show it is not that serious, unlike other foundations. It's in the spirit of the WEC to do a thing, create energy and split--stopping gave symbolic energy, so be the same about the money.

Dick: We all agree it's third class energy. It puts discipline on us. Still like two shits a year--like investment--use it for ingenuous things. I want to explore greater use of our skills, don't want to be considered frivolous, I'm really not into money disposal yet.

Stewart: I knew better what I was doing by not having stopped the Catalog at the end of the first year. I agree with criticism that stopping is not responsible, think POINT more valuable as ongoing piece of visibility.

Mike: Still like giving away and to not limit giving--go beyond zero. ~~Give~~ (BORROW) We do want a way to end it if and when necessary.

Huey: Past board members should be able to kill it by majority.

Stewart: Set turnover rate of money or personnel or projects. Build in a high adaptability course.

Mike: I feel the real issue is the ~~annihilation~~ debilitating effect of money. Like agent concept for now, but am concerned if it will work; or will it prove destructive to agents.

Bill: I don't want to give up now, don't see it as a danger, feel it's important to maintain energy and trust ourselves to know when to quit, not build it in at beginning.

Elijah: Relax on spend now/later issue. I know nothing about money, but find it's a more charged issue than sex in my practice. In preparing for the board meeting I talked to two friends who were involved with foundations and both indicated the most difficult kind of help to get was starter money. I see POINT to be like a Santa Claus who needs ways to find out what is going on and who needs help. Some areas for exploration might be consumerism (no foundation will touch it), education, new communities or model communities and establishment of an agricultural extension. On spend now/later question I feel we should ask ourselves "What is different about it? What is needed? Fund people rather than projects? How evaluate these? (but primarily) "What do we want to know in a year?"

At this point we stopped for dinner and watched CBS 60-minute Report, after which we settled down to further save/spend discussion.

Jerry: I'm aware that 'spend' is not going over by consensus. I'm in agreement with our having a sense of the moment being right or not for continuing, and that there may be a time we will want to stop. Still committed to ending at some time, but want to do whatever necessary to keep it going, but not develop the money or perpetuating it as a fund. Not opposed to other income. Like turnover basis, love idea of revolving institution, like to explore ways to build this in, but am satisfied with present setup.

Dick: I don't want to be encumbered by money, want board to practice making decisions rapidly--we'll never be wise enough, so don't delay giving moeny on that basis.

Stewart: I don't like endless aspect. Learned from the Demise that groups never reach agreement on the future, there is no end to good projects and people become exausted through attrition/exaustion.

There was some discussion on when to meet and when to give more money away. Some preferred using time for agenting rather than functioning as board members. It was agreed not to commit to a schedule and to take time out this summer.

This was followed by discussion of how to select more agents. The policy of "Because you asked, the answer is no" was explored. Most were opposed to that as a policy.

Stewart: I suggest that Eleanor answer requests with the response that "We treat anything that comes in as news--we don't feel obliged to answer. Write to us so we can deal with it readily, but don't count on it."

Comments indicated an attitude of 'we are doing the looking', also that POINT members relate to the public on an individual basis. There was concern that no one be left hanging if they were anticipating funds.

Stewart: To summarize our public position, "Agents are on their own trip. We trust them as people. People who write in are wasting their time." Names of Board members and agents are public, but home phone numbers shouldn't be published. Answer inquiries candidly.

In discussing POINT publications, it was felt that it would be good to have something to hand out, it would be useful to influence other foundations. Elijah's might be asked by their host to submit a paper for publication also, arrangements to be between host and Elijah. It was considered helpful for outsiders to have an understanding of Elijah's.

After a short break the subject of format on proposals and catagories for proposals was brought up. Zomeworks was excluded because it is being considered as an investment. Comments were made on the idea of giving awards to individuals as recognition. It was suggested that any awards given be from individuals and are given as grants for seed money. A number of projects were named for consideration by the board. Investment in Zomeworks was discussed. It was determined Steve Baer is interested only in investments, not in grants. There was some discussion about Steve Baer and the future of solar energy.

Dick: This would be an opportunity to learn about solar energy and though it is being made as an investment, should be regarded as a grant, in that we should not count on getting it back. Stewart should be in touch with Steve's developments.

no!

It was agreed not to regard it as a grant, and that, ~~as~~ an investment, ~~was separate from the portfolio.~~ It was considered to be the right kind of longshot.

Huey distributed a description of proposed land development plan and elaborated a little on some aspects of LORAX. The discussion regarding LORAX was concerned primarily with Huey's concern that he not get into a position of self-dealing. He saw LORAX as someday being able to give money to POINT. Funds are needed for starter money. Huey pointed out the difference between Nature Conservency and LORAX is that NC is primarily concerned with the preservation of 'scientific land' and LORAX would be more in the area of social experimentation and would operate with the best features of the Nature Conservency setup. Huey doesn not want a loan.

Dick: I suggest we talk to insurance companies before going any further and ways should be found in which POINT can help LORAX.

Huey: I also will have an informal ruling from the IRS sometime in the next six weeks. I would like to withdraw the proposal at this time and bring it up for consideration later, after we have more legal advice.

Jerry's ESP proposal was discussed next. There was little interest in POINT supporting this as presented, though the subject and implications of this research is of interest to individuals.

Jerry: I find I would rather talk about this in personal reaction terms to the subject, rather than to pushing this particular proposal.

Other approaches for them to get their money are explored and it is discovered they are planning to do a book on the conference and it's felt the publisher's advance on the book should give them the needed starting money. Everyone seems to feel good at having produced an alternative solution out of the group process, that this is as valuable a tool as money.

The meeting ended for the night and Stewart presented a showing of his film WAR GOD.

Diana opens the Monday morning session by pointing out there are three hours in which to cover ten more projects.

Bill: A project that's come to my attention involves work being done by Neill Morris through the National Council of Churches to improve the quality of children's TV and increase the amount of locally originated programs for kids.

There is little response to supporting this and people begin commenting on the heaviness of evaluating these proposals as a group process.

Huey: Proposals should be written out ahead of time and mailed to people so they are familiar with the material by the time they get to the meeting.

Jerry: I agree that it is a painful, slow process. I try to keep a sense of the absurdity in viewing the process and that I would rather go by personal instinct. The rationalization trip is a bummer.

Mike: I can't conceive of rational adults wanting to evaluate projects. The agent concept and the agent tie to the board is a powerful tool, but no papers presented seem to be toward a coherent goal.

Jerry: Most things we propose are projections of ourselves and our own interests.

Dick: This process is a trial run, most of us don't want to do this. We should refocus on what we do want. We should also consider a fast, short term way of helping those needing funds within two weeks, for instance.

Jerry: I suggest a discretionary fund of 15-20K for each angent in order to take care of personal visions and be free to function as a group in dealing with bigger things like Stockholm conferences or Huey's land thing.

Stewart: I suggest 25K.

Dick: Each agent should also be entitled to two agents as well as having the 25K fund.

Mike: I'm against this. It is excessive and waste of funds. Don't want it for myself.

Jerry: It's bullshit to try to figure out best projects and other foundations have been trying to do it that way. The process is impossible. I prefer discretionary fund idea because it makes me more serious in personal approach to funding and gives me more freedom to make personal descisions.

Elijah: I find this a relief. We are all operating from different points of view and this is constructive way out of dealing with the group process.

Stewart: It's the most variable producing format possible. Learn from it, and the board should replace itself eventually with people good at giving away money.

Everyone but mike relived and pleased with this new format.

Mike: I see money as needing to be accounted for all the time, as a fantasy to most people, it creates a nightmare for people who have monetary goal inconsistent with their life style. Giving it away creates a power link between you and the recipient.

There is more discussion with everyone trying to encourage Mike to change his view, arguing his reasons are actually good arguments <u>for</u> new format.

Dick: I want to remind you Mike that you said on the way here that playfulness is the only factor you like in the money giving thing, and it seems that this is the setup that allows for that.

Mike: I concede that that is the only appeal of this approach for me.

There some question raised about accounting and capital equipment, etc., but it seemed inappropriate to discuss it at this time without some legal advice. There is still hangup by Mike in achieving a concensus on establishing a discretionary fund and increasing the number of agents for each board member to two.

Stewart: The only way to prevent these hangups is for me as president to reserve the right to force decision making.

After some more discussion, the solution to moving on is to accept, by consensus, a vote of 6-1 for establishing a discretionary fund of 25K for each board member and allowing each board member two agents. This was considered to be an 'operational consensus' which would not hang things up, but allow it to be recorded that Mike was against the change.

Jerry: I would like the minutes of the January meeting to be changed to show an operational consensus with my vote being for adding women and blacks to the board.

Questions came up regarding future and past roles of Elijah's. Should Elijah's be paid to write a paper, should they nominate agents? It was agreed no policy should be made, but that this can be left to each host and his Elijah.

Elijah: You shouldn't give money to an Elijah. It's valuable to have Elijah's act as advocates against what you are doing.

At this point time had run out. Everyone expressed appreciation to Pierre for his excellent and helpful job as Elijah and he was asked to tell us about his project idea.

Elijah: My hope is to establish a retreat somewhere that would serve as a place for people who will someday be in important decision making places, possibly in times of crises and hostility to have an opportunity to meet and get acquainted and explore each others philosopies and views so that when they someday find themselves on opposite sides of bargaining tables they will not be meeting as strangers. I would hope this would have a different affect on their dealings, and consider it most valuable to the future of the world. I plan to finish writing my book on intimacy and it will probably be about a year before I'm ready to put this idea into operation.

The meeting was ended with Stewart offering to host the next meeting, sometime early in March, place to be announced.

Submitted by,

Roberta English